

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
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USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 00843

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: SOCIALIST ELECTION EXPERT TALKS POLITICS

SUMMARY. ROGER FAJARDIE, THE LEADING SOCIALIST (PS) ELECTORAL ANALYST AND ONE OF FRANCE'S RECOGNIZED AUTHORITIES ON THE ELECTORAL SCENE, IS STICKING BY HIS PREDICTIONS OF LAST SEPTEMBER WITH ONLY SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS. OVER DINNER WITH EMBOFFS, FAJARDIE SPOKE WITH CONFIDENCE OF A LEFT MAJORITY IN POPULAR VOTES ON THE FIRST ROUND (LED BY A DOMINANT PS), BUT EXPRESSED GREATER RESERVATION OVER THE LEFT'S ABILITY TO TRANSFER FIRST-ROUND VOTES INTO DEPUTIES IN THE SECOND ROUND. HE IS CONVINCED THE COMMUNISTS (PCF) HAVE NOW DECIDED NOT TO ENTER THE GOVERNMENT, THUS DESTROYING THE LEFT DYNAMIC
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WHICH HAD BEEN BUILDING UP SINCE 1973 AND MAKING SECOND-ROUND TRANSFER OF VOTES LESS PREDICTABLE. FAJARDIE SAYS THAT FRANCOIS MITTERRAND IS NOT AS PESSIMISTIC AS MANY IN THE PS LEADERSHIP AND IS PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE POLITICAL BATTLE BEYOND A DEFEAT IN 1978. FOR THAT REASON, MITTERRAND HAS ESTABLISHED AN EVEN STRONGER PS AS PRIORITY NUMBER ONE FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. END

SUMMARY.

1. ELECTORAL UNCERTAINTY: THOUGH CONVINCED THAT THE RUPTURE OVER THE COMMON PROGRAM WILL LAST THROUGH THE ELECTIONS AND THAT THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT WANT TO ENTER GOVERNMENT, SOCIALIST PARTY ELECTIONS SPECIALIST ROGER FAJARDIE HAS ONLY SLIGHTLY REVISED HIS PREDICTION FOR 1978. HE CONSIDERS THE ELECTORAL EQUATION MUCH MORE UNCERTAIN DUE TO PCF UNPREDICTABILITY. ON SEPTEMBER 22, THE DAY OF THE LEFT RUPTURE, FAJARDIE TOLD US THAT THE WINNER IN 1978 WOULD HAVE NO MORE THAN A 15-SEAT MARGIN, BE IT RIGHT OR LEFT. HE PREDICTED 170-180 PS/MRG DEPUTIES AND 80-90 PCF. FAJARDIE NOW PREDICTS 140-170 PS/MRG AND 70-90 PCF DEPUTIES. ALTHOUGH HE STILL BELIEVES, AS IN SEPTEMBER, THAT THE FRENCH ELECTORATE IS IRREPARABLY DIVIDED, WITH ABOUT 53 PERCENT READY TO VOTE ANTI-MAJORITY AND 47 PERCENT READY TO SUPPORT THE MAJORITY, FAJARDIE NOW SAYS THAT THE PCF HAS "UPSET THE ELECTORAL DYNAMIC" WHICH WOULD HAVE TRANSLATED LEFT VOTES ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY INTO A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. HE REMAINS VERY POSITIVE CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF LEFT VOTES ON THE FIRST ROUND -- A NEARLY CERTAIN MAJORITY WITH SOME 7 MILLION PLUS FOR THE PS -- BUT LESS SO AS TO THE NUMBER OF DEPUTIES ACTUALLY PRODUCED AFTER THE SECOND ROUND.

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2. WHITHER THE PCF?: FAJARDIE SHARES THE COMMON SOCIALIST EXPLANATION FOR THE PCF'S CURRENT LINE, I.E., A DESIRE TO REDISTRIBUTE THE BALANCE OF FORCE WITHIN THE LEFT, A RELUCTANCE TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ECONOMY AT THE PRESENT TIME, A DESIRE TO ELIMINATE FRANCOIS MITTERRAND AS A POLITICAL FORCE, ETC. ALTHOUGH MOST PS LEADERS WERE SURPRISED AT COMMUNIST INTRANSIGENCE IN SEPTEMBER, THE REASONS FOR SUCH A POSITION ARE EASY ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND IN RETROSPECT, AND FAJARDIE SEES NO MERIT IN MORE DIABOLICAL EXPLANATIONS SUCH AS, "THE HAND OF MOSCOW", INTERNAL PCF CENTRAL COMMITTEE QUARRELS, AND THE LIKE. HE BELIEVES THAT THE CURRENT PCF LEADERSHIP IS AS FIRMLY IN CONTROL AS EVER AND THAT ITS PRESENT ANTI-SOCIALIST LINE (SUBSEQUENTLY ENDORSED AT THE JANUARY 7-8 NATIONAL CONFERENCE) WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE MARCH ELECTIONS. THE DECISION ON PCF CANDIDATES STEPPING DOWN ON THE SECOND ROUND IN FAVOR OF BETTER PLACED SOCIALISTS WILL NOT BE TAKEN UNTIL AFTER THE FIRST ROUND RESULTS ARE IN, ALLOWING THE COMMUNISTS TO VIEW THEIR OVERALL STRENGTH VIS-A-VIS THE PS AND ADJUST SECOND-ROUND TACTICS ACCORDINGLY. (COMMENT: MARCHAIS USED THE CONFERENCE TO CHARACTERIZE PRESENT

PCF STRENGTH OF 21 PERCENT AS "INSUFFICIENT" FOR INSURING THAT "REAL CHANGE" WOULD RESULT FROM AN ALLIANCE WITH THE PS).

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3. PS STRATEGY: ACCORDING TO FAJARDIE, SOCIALIST STRATEGY REMAINS UNCHANGED, I.E., TO OBTAIN AS LARGE A VOTE AS POSSIBLE ON THE FIRST ROUND (MORE THAN SEVEN MILLION AT LEAST), THUS DEMONSTRATING THE PARTY'S REAL STRENGTH AND PLACING THE PCF SQUARELY BEFORE A CHOICE OF EITHER SUPPORTING OR DENYING A LEFT VICTORY. IN THE EVENT OF A LEFT MAJORITY, FAJARDIE FEELS THE PCF WOULD SUPPORT A PS/MRG GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT, EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE BY ACCEPTING MINISTERIAL POSITIONS. SUCH A HOMOGENEOUS PS GOVERNMENT WOULD IMPLEMENT THE COMMON PROGRAM AS UPDATED, USING THE PS VERSION WHERE AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN REACHED. FAJAR-

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DIE, A LONG-TIME ASSOCIATE OF FRANCOIS MITTERRAND, CHARACTERIZES MITTERRAND AS LESS PESSIMISTIC THAN MOST PS LEADERS AND READY TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT BEYOND 1978.

4. COMMENT: MITTERRAND HAS THUS FAR LIVED UP TO FAJARDIE'S ANALYSIS, ATTACKING BARRE AND GISCARD MORE VIGOROUSLY OF LATE AND TAKING A HARDER LINE IN DEFENDING HIMSELF AGAINST MARCHAIS. WE ALSO AGREE WITH FAJARDIE'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ELECTORATE AS ESSENTIALLY FROZEN. THERE HAS BEEN A NOTABLE ABSENCE OF MOVEMENT IN OPINION POLLS SINCE THE SEPTEMBER RUPTURE, IN SPITE OF THE CONSIDERABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOCK WHICH FOLLOWED. ALTHOUGH THE LEFT HAS DIPPED SLIGHTLY AND THE PERSONAL POPULARITY OF MARCHAIS AND MITTERRAND HAS DROPPED, THE MAJORITY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MOVE BEYOND 47 PERCENT. AS FAJARDIE NOTES AS WELL, THERE REMAINS A LARGE UNDECIDED VOTE (ABOUT 20 PERCENT) ON WHICH EVERY PARTY HAS ELECTORAL DESIGNS. OUR GUESS IS THAT THIS VOTE WILL SPLIT IN ROUGHLY THE SAME MANNER AS CURRENTLY DECLARED VOTING INTENTIONS, ALTHOUGH EVEN A SLIGHT VARIATION COULD BE CRITICAL IN A CLOSE ELECTION.
HARTMAN

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